

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 0201

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, PO
SUBJECT: AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT VIEWS ON LAJES BASE TALKS

REF: LISBON 1729(DTG 081726Z MAR 78)(NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS, BOTH THE AZOREAN REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT (RGA) REPRESENTATIVE TO GOP INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON
AZORES BASE NEGOTIATIONS AND RGA PRESIDENT INFORMED AMCONSUL THAT
BEFORE GOP MOVES TO FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH US, RGA FIRST WISHES 1)
GOP ACCEPTANCE OF SOME CHANGES TO EXISTING TECHNICAL AGREEMENT SECTION

ON LABOR RELATIONS AND 2) GOP SUPPORT OF SEPARATE ANNEX WHOSE EFFECT
WOULD BE TO BREAK THE TAP MONOPOLY OVER ACCESS TO LAJES AIRBASE. THIS

IS THE FIRST INDICATION THAT RGA MIGHT LINK ITS SUPPORT OF A BASE
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ACCORD TO GOP AGREEMENT TO OPEN LAJES TO REGULAR USE BY FOREIGN
CIVILIAN AIRLINES. END SUMMARY.

1. AMCONSUL SPOKE MARCH 17 WITH DR. JOSE REIS LEITE, RGA REPRESENTA-
TIVE TO GOP INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON AZORES BASE NEGOTIATIONS, AND
MARCH 23 WITH RGA PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL CONCERNING THEIR VIEWS ON BASE

ACCORD. BOTH SAID THAT RGA IS IN AGREEMENT WITH GENERAL LINES OF US NON-PAPER TABLED OCTOBER 17 WHICH WAS DISCUSSED AT GOP TASK FORCE MEETING MARCH 2. HOWEVER, THEY FELT THAT BEFORE GOP BEGAN FORMAL TALKS WITH U.S., AT LEAST ONE MORE MEETING OF GOP SIDE WOULD BE NECESSARY TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE FOLLOWING RGA PROPOSALS:

2. LABOR ANNEX: ACCORDING TO REIS LEITE, EXISTING TECHNICAL AGREEMENT OR ANNEX SHOULD BE AMENDED TO PROVIDE FOR RIGHT OF LABOR UNIONS REPRESENTING BASE WORKERS TO MAINTAIN DIRECT CONTACTS WITH THE US COMMAND. ANNEX SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE FOR SOME NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (SNE) ROLE IN SELECTION AND TRAINING OF BASE WORKERS. (COMMENT: RGA IS SEEKING GOP TRANSFER OF SNE FROM LABOR MINISTRY TO RGA SECRETARIAT OF LABOR. END COMMENT.) FINALLY REIS LEITE SAID RGA WISHES FIRM UNDERSTANDING WITH THE US THAT HENCEFORTH US WILL RESPECT TECHNICAL AGREEMENT PROVISION SPECIFYING PRIMARY OF PORTUGUESE

LABOR LAW OVER AMERICAN LAW.

3. OPENING LAJES TO CIVILIAN AIR TRAFFIC: REIS LEITE SAID RGA WOULD ALSO PRESS FOR GOP SUPPORT FOR ENTIRELY SEPARATE ANNEX TO ACCORD THAT WOULD FORMALLY OPEN LAJES AIRBASE TO REGULAR USE BY CIVILIAN AIRLINES. SINCE RGA DID NOT INTEND THAT BASE BE OPENED TO ALL NATIONALITIES, REIS LEITE SAID THIS ANNEX COULD GO AS FAR AS TO SPECIFY WHICH FOREIGN NATIONS' AIRLINES WOULD HAVE LANDING RIGHTS. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, HE SAID THAT AT LEAST ONE US AIRLINE SHOULD BE ALLOWED ACCESS.
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4. IN A LATER CONVERSATION, RGA PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL EXPLAINED THAT THE RGA PLACES VERY HIGH PRIORITY ON BREAKING THE TAP MONOPOLY OVER CIVILIAN AIR TRAFFIC IN AND OUT OF THE REGION THROUGH LAJES. HE SAID THAT THE REGION COULD NO LONGER PERMIT ITSELF TO BE AT THE MERCY OF ONE AIRLINE (TAP) WHOSE RECORD WAS ONE OF NOTORIOUSLY UNRELIABLE SERVICE AND DISREGARD FOR THE REGION. BOTH HE AND REIS LEITE THOUGHT THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS TO GUARANTEE THE OPENNING OF LAJES TO FOREIGN AIRLINES WOULD BE THROUGH AN ANNEX TO THE BASE AGREE-

MENT ITSELF. (COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST INDICATION AMCONSUL HAS SEEN THAT RGA MIGHT LINK ITS SUPPORT OF BASE AGREEMENT TO GOP AGREEMENT TO OPEN UP LAJES TO FOREIGN AIRLINES. HOWEVER, IT IS A MEASURE OF RGA FRUSTRATION OVER CONSISTENT REFUSAL BY GOP AND TAP TO PERMIT TWA TO USE LAJES. END COMMENT).

5. REIS LEITE SAID THAT RGA WOULD ALSO REQUEST THAT GOP OBTAIN US CLARIFICATION OF CERTAIN "AMBIGUITIES" CONCERNING EVENTUAL IMPORT-EXPORT BANK LOANS TO RGA IN CONNECTION WITH BASE AGREEMENT.
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